

**Manitowoc County Public Safety Committee**  
**Manitowoc County Communication and Technology Building, Room 111**

**June 9, 2021 5:00 p.m.**

Attendance: Chairperson Dave Nickels, Supervisor James Falkowski, and Supervisor Nick Muench.

Excused: Supervisor Rick Henrickson

Absent: Supervisor Charles Hagen.

Others in attendance: Patricia Koppa, County Executive Bob Ziegelbauer, Travis Waack, Dan Hartwig and Chief Josh Stradal, Branch FD

Chairperson Dave Nickels called the meeting to order at 05:06 p.m. Roll call circulated.

Minutes: Chairperson Dave Nickels asked if there were any corrections to the minutes of the April 21, 2021 committee meeting, and none being offered, asked for a motion to approve. Motion was made by Supervisor James Falkowski, seconded by Supervisor Dave Nickels and unanimously approved.

Public comment. No one present to speak. Public comment closed 5:07.

Chair Nickels noted that the proposed next meeting date, if there are no urgent issues, will be September 8, 2021.

Report of Coroner Curtis Green: Brought 2019, 2020 and 2021 year to date statistics. Asked that if there are any questions, supervisors feel free to call him directly. Noted that for Manitowoc County, there were 872 total deaths for 2020. Number of deaths was not out of the ordinary. It does not appear that the pandemic significantly impacted the total. From July to October of 2020 coroner office “took jurisdiction” over death determinations and Coroner or Chief Deputy Coroner signed all death certificates. There was a great deal of pressure on his office and on doctors to change death certificates to not reflect the covid diagnosis as a factor in the deaths. While there was not a bump in Manitowoc County due to covid related deaths, there is with the drug overdose related deaths. These remain very high. For his office there is an issue due to the shortage of pathologists to do autopsies needed with such deaths. Price with transportation and toxicology is roughly \$2500. Currently there is delay in getting the examinations. Results in delay in billing and a skewing of the budget. Paying for 8 of the 2020 procedures in 2021. The annual budget allows for 11 procedures total. The issue is not going away – recently found a new, rare drug during an autopsy that does not show with any other tests. Also unusually high levels of Fentanyl and Meth. Explained that full autopsy is needed, rather than just a toxicology test, as a service to the family the true cause of death.

Coroner noted that cremations are becoming more common and there are examinations required by law. The office gets a fee for such examinations which is providing additional revenue for the office. Not enough to offset the autopsy expenses, but helpful.

Chair Nickels thanked the Coroner for his report and reminded him he is always welcome to come by.

Next up Chair Nickels noted he had communications from outside agencies with concerns about a “spike” in departures from Jt. Dispatch in May and invited Travis Waack, Emergency Services Director to discuss the situation.

Director Waack advised that one departure was due to medical issues, two were still in training and not comfortable with job, one person left as they were no longer satisfied with the position and one gave early notice that leaving in August. The three supervisors can and are filling shifts. This should help prevent burnout until new hires are made. He and the assistant are doing some administrative tasks which are otherwise done by the supervisors. Sees no reduction in services. Recruitment was taking place before these notices came in; began interviewing this week (Week of June 7). Fourteen interviews are being scheduled for those who passed tests. Included a senior dispatcher on the interview panel to provide a realistic view of the job and schedule; best and worst call examples. Are reviewing the training program. It is a hands-on process. Review led to training additional trainers and change in the paperwork for the trainers themselves. Considering implementing some classroom sessions for group hiring situations to create efficiencies. Also noted this is not an isolated situation and is shared by our neighboring counties. Responded to supervisor questions. Anticipates full staffing in a short time. Admits full staff does not resolve some of the conflicts among all the various county public safety agencies. He is continuing to try to address the issues. Some are decades old but will continue efforts to resolve.

Chair Nickels thanked Director Waack for his report and efforts to resolve the difficult situations.

Sheriff Dan Hartwig–

- Jail has not been fully staffed since 2013. Sheriff’s Office continues to go through several hiring processes to fill a corrections officer vacancy. Fourth round of hiring to fill a single female corrections position. Only 9 applied on the last process with no candidates.
- New opening on patrol has been filled from a recent resignation. A bailiff is retiring July 1st and there is a new hire coming in from another agency.
- One military deployment has ended, another will end in October. Two new officers will be in training.
- A civil process clerk also left for the Two Rivers Police Dept; new hire starting soon.
- Budget... lower civil process revenue because of COVID restrictions which are now easing; increase in extradition costs we are currently over budget in that area.
- Squad cameras still to be purchased – this is a capital outlay item for this year’s budget. Other large expenses: AED, electronic medical records system have been purchased and are getting implemented.

- Training on schedule. Range needed to be mined this year which is a large expense for our training budget. We made a larger ammo purchase due to general shortages. Working on agency integration training. Received grants for speed and seatbelt enforcement. Valders and Francis Creek patrol contracts are in place. Overtime under control but summer is the busy season for this.
- Squads are behind this year due to chip shortages. They are normally received in March and this year we received our first two at the end of May. We were very fortunate to order in November. Thanked committee for allowing to use instead of bidding out on own.
- New dog and canine officer are in training and will be graduating June 18<sup>th</sup>. Sheriff's Office recently signed an MOU with the US Marshall Office. Three investigators will be Task Force Officers for the Marshall's Service.
- AODA position now part of jail as part of the NNAI grant. Revenue is good and on track in the jail. State inmates are being held longer and WI DOC is paying for housing the overflow. Jail overtime is not an issue. Drug unit... remains a serious issue. Working on increasing the number of officers on unit. Jail during lockdown was handled well. No confirmed COVID-19 cases in the jail during the pandemic.
- New community outreach this coming weekend "Cops and Bobbers" to connect disadvantaged kids and police officers by going fishing. Paws for Laws (a new 501(c)(3)) initiatives/partnership to help financially support our K9 program. Several officers recognized for their efforts and service.

Chair Nickels thanked Sheriff Hartwig for the details.

At 5:57 went to the jail for the inspection.

Motion to adjourn made by Chair Nickels, seconded by Supervisor Muench. Meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted



Patricia A. Koppa, Register in Probate

For Supervisor Nicholas Muench, Committee Secretary